



# Note to Correspondents

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## **EPA'S BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM RECOGNIZED AS INNOVATION LEADER**

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EPA's Brownfields Program is being honored today with Vice President Gore's National Partnership for Reinventing Government Hammer Award for innovations in government. The Brownfields Program has revolutionized the way the federal government manages the process of prevention, assessment, cleanup and redevelopment of contaminated property. The Brownfields Program employees are being recognized for their outstanding contributions that have helped open the private sector marketplace to thousands of acres of land that were once written off as blighted and deemed without value.

EPA Administrator Carol M. Browner said, "The Brownfields Program is a national model for restoring and revitalizing blighted industrial and commercial properties. The driving force behind creating a successful program like this is largely due to the diligent efforts of the dedicated EPA employees being recognized today."

Due to the cooperative efforts of EPA, in conjunction with the states and local governments, many of these formerly blighted properties now provide hope in the form of new jobs, healthier neighborhoods, and safer streets. Once viewed as liabilities, public hazards, and investment risks, these brownfields have evolved into opportunities for developers, investors, and communities. The brownfields program has provided over 500 pilot grants to communities totaling over \$156 million.

The Brownfields program uses novel and creative approaches to return properties to productive use. The program uses small amounts of seed money to spur communities to help themselves. Funds are used to remove environmental uncertainties and galvanize existing local creativity, capitalism and free enterprise to leverage cleanup and redevelopment funding. Innovating within existing regulatory authority, the Brownfields Program is unique because it seeks out private investment as the most important source of funding to meet local goals. The program's \$200,000 site assessment grants have already leveraged over \$2 billion in cleanup and redevelopment funding and returned hundreds of properties to productive reuse and created more than 6,000 jobs.

The Hammer Award is presented to teams of federal employees who have made significant contributions in support of reinventing government principles. In 1993, President Clinton presented Vice President Gore with a challenge to create a government that works better, costs less and gets results Americans care about. Vice President Gore created the Hammer Award to recognize the innovative and important work done by the American government worker and those they partner with.

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